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THE FAMILY IN CANADA:

A SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR THE ELDERLY

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ABSTRACT

Throughout Western society, the socio-economic changes have accelerated in recent decades resulting in a dramatic increase in the average span of life. These changes which have accompanied industrialization and urbanization have affected the relationships among family members, irrespective of their culture. This paper explores the widespread notion of the family's historical decline as an important supportive institution in the environment of older people. This is intended to provide additional insights on the extent to which the family can serve as an effective channel for the social and economic support of aged Canadians. The data come from a 1984 national probability survey of 5315 women.

The results indicate that inspite of the influence of forces growing out of industrialism, adult women in Canada do respond to the needs of their parents as best as they can. It appears that the aged are more integrated into industrial society than was previously thought, and that the family continues to be a significant source of support for older people. Evidence, however, suggests that Canadian families have been influenced a great deal by their cultural origins.

There is a general argument that the processes associated with industrialization and modernization have led to the breakdown of the traditional family (Burgess, 1960; Goode, 1963; Cowgill and Holmes, 1972; Cowgill, 1974). The impact of these changes is seen to create a weakening of the contacts between generations. Functions which may once have been the unique responsibility of the family thus become shared functions of the family and other nonfamilial institutions such as government or industry. Inter-generational relationships undoubtedly have undergone dramatic changes in modern scoiety, and, to a certain extent to family fragmentation. However, it is premature to conclude that modernizing forces have undermined family structure and generations are completely disconnected from one another.

A new ideology has arisen which questions the modernization theory while emphasizing the endurance of familial bonds. Gerontolists have produced definitive evidence of the maintenance of intensive relationships between family generations (Shanas et al., 1968; Maddox, 1975; Lang and Brody, 1983; Sundström, 1986). The 'modern' family is seen as a major source of help to the elderly in need of emotional support and/or personal care.

There are a number of studies that have examined the role of adult children in parent-care activities. However, a number of issues regarding family relations and aging which have significant consequences for practitioners and policy-makers are yet to be cleared. Moreover, a knowledge of factors influencing the attitude of children toward aging kin, it is hoped, will enhance our understanding of the family as a supportive institution. This study is undertaken with the intent of exploring how willing Canadian women are to provide care for their aged parents. Another interest is the impact of socio-economic, demographic, and cultural factors on willingness to provide care.

Canada should be particularly suited for exploring these issues, as the "older population" is aging at an alarming rate[1]. Also, in view of the cultural diversity of the Canadian population, an

understanding of the ways in which generational relationships and supports are influenced by ethnic/immigrant culture is of both theoretical and practical interest.

Family as a Support System for the Elderly

Much of the research dealing with the relationships between adult children and their aged parents has documented high rates of interaction, mutual support and affection between the generations (Sussman, 1976; Rosenmayr, 1977; Ivester and King, 1977; Johnson, 1978; Lang and Brody, 1983; Taylor, 1985; Sundström, 1986). Sussman (1976) believes that intergenerational ties are unbroken despite industrialization and modernization and the more recent emergence of new family types and life-styles. Ivester and King (1977) have noted that, in the United States, adolescents have a positive attitude toward aged with the relationship being stronger in the middle class than the lower class, and among whites than nonwhites.

The study by Lang and Brody (1983) examined the relationships between selected characteristics of a sample of middle-aged daughters and the nature and amount of help that they provided to their elderly mothers. Their results indicated that the daughters' characteristics (age, marital status, work status, and living arragements) were related significantly to the amount of help they provided. Parents received more care from older daughters and those who shared their households. Married daughters and those who were employed were found to provide less care.

A cross-generational study of womens' (American and Japanese) attitudes toward filial responsibility was conducted by Campbell and Brody (1985). In both countries, all three generations (elderly grand-mothers, middle-aged daughters, and young-adult grand-daughters) were found to hold the traditional value that care of an elderly is a family responsibility. The authors, however, noted that attitudes toward filial responsibility were more positive among the Americans than among the Japanese.

According to the study of Sundström (1986) in Sweden, geographic distance and contacts between adults and their aging parents varies by social class as well as by the social mobility of the offspring. Thus, middle class adults live further from their parents and have less contacts with them. In contrast, contacts and exchange of care are more frequent when children live nearby, regardless of the marital status and occupational status of the potential care givers.

While this review gives some indication of the extent to which family serve as a source of support to the elderly, there is very little evidence in these studies which would confirm or refute the claim that family relationships are unaffected by industrialization and modernization. A major question still remains: Does culture make a difference in family support? Most of the work dealing with the relationship of children and their aged parents is largely derived from studies focusing on racial differences in family relationships. Analyses which are limited to racial differences fail to illuminate the heterogeneity (if any) of the family life among different cultural groups. Consequently, the results of these studies may not be adaptable to multicultural societies such as Canada. Empirical analyses of the relationships among generations have not yet been undertaken in Canada. The available American Studies tend to shed only limited light on the generational relationship with respect to the characteristics of the care givers. In other words, clarifying the family as a support system needs consideration of cultural (such as ethnicity) differences in family relationships. Further, a majority of available work to date has been based on descriptive statistics (exceptions to this statement are the works of Ivester and King (1977); Lang and Brody (1983); Campbell and Brody (1985)).

The present study is intended to overcome some of these limitations: first, by considering the question in the Canadian setting; and second, by considering socio-economic and cultural variations in willingness to provide care for the aged.

Data and Methods

The data utilized in this paper are drawn from the Canadian Fertility Survey (CFS) of 5315 women between the ages of 18 to 49. The CFS is Canada's first national fertility survey, carried out by telephone in April-June of 1984. The sample was selectd using a two-stage probability process. The first stage involved the selection of households through the random generation of telephone numbers. The second stage involved the choice of eligible respondents (women aged 18 to 49) in each selected household. A detailed methodological report for the interviews and sample attrition is reported elsewhere (see Tremblay and Trudel, 1984). The CFS provides information on a number of demographic, socio-economic, and cultural variables. In addition, it is equipped with a set of questions on attitude towards marriage, having children, and caring for parents. The present analysis is restricted to only those women who have parents (one or both) alive at the time of the survey. This reduces the sample size to 4851 women.

Despite the argument of the modernization thesis of aging, historical changes have created new constraints on young families in caring for aging kin. The vast increase in the numbers of older people accompanied by changes in women's social roles, and in particular, the rise in labor force participation of middle-aged women has produced obligations which compete with parent-care activities. The argument here is that certain characteristics of potential care givers themselves (such as employment status, marital status, and financial situation) are associated with the attitudes of individuals toward caregiving and consequently the type and amount of care given.

One of the most important factors affecting the attitudes toward care giving is age. Lang and Brody (1983), for example, have indicated that the age of daughters relates significantly to the amount of help they provided: the older the daughter, the greater the amount of care provided. These authors have noted that adult children have often been characterized as the "patron" (Hill et al., 1970) or "sandwich" generation (Schwartz, 1979) because of their multiple responsibilities for the old and the young. Although it has not been explicitly stated, it appears reasonable to suggest that a

shortening of the span of time between generations would occur between older children and their parents and that would lead to a further strengthening of emotional ties. Based on these arguements, one would postulate that *older women tend be more supportive of their parents than younger women.*

Marital status has obvious implications for explaining attitudes and behaviour of children toward aged parents (Shanas et al., 1968; Lang and Brody, 1983). As Lang and Brody (1983:199) state: "being married and being employed seemed to operate as competing demands, 'pulling' time away from the number of hours devoted to parent care." Also, in their classic cross-national study, Shanas and her colleagues (1968) found that unmarried daughters were overrepresented among those with whom elderly parents shared households. This would mean that elderly parents often rely for help on a child with fewest competing responsibilities (see Lang and Brody, 1983). These orientations suggest that in so far as married children have more familial responsibilities and to the extent that parents are reluctant to turn for assistance to their married children, *married daughters are less likely to be supportive of their parents than non-married daughters.*

Socio-economic status differences in parent-child support relations often revealed that children of low socio-economic status had a higher likelihood than children of high socio-economic status to have a supportive relationship (Taylor, 1985). This leads to the hypothesis that *the higher the socio-economic status (education and income) the less willing the daughters to provide support for their elderly parents.*

Employment status of daughters is also associated with the provision of support to their elderly parents: being employed makes daughters somewhat less available as care providers. Lang and Brody's (1983) study, for example, found significant differences in the amount of help provided by working and nonworking women, with working women providing fewer hours of help (6.2 hours, compared with 12.3 hours for the nonworking women). In other words, *employment of women outside the home tends to have a negative effect on their willingness to provide support.*

There is a good deal of empirical evidence that each of the variables described above predicts generational relationships. Less clear is the influence of cultural factors on generational relationships. Although it has not been explicitly postulated, it appears reasonable to suggest that cultural characteristics (such as ethnicity and religion) of potential care givers, too, would influence the attitude and consequently the amount of support provided. *Families in some ethnic groups may be highly supportive of their elderly when compared to other ethnic groups.* For example, in a study of Hispanic black and white families in New York City, Cantor (1979) found ethnicity as a predictor of higher family interaction. However, the study did not find black-white differentials in family interaction, once the socio-economic and other relevant variables were controlled. Bengston's (1979) study also found ethnicity to be a predictor of higher levels of family interaction for older Mexican Americans but not for blacks or whites when relevant variables were controlled. These examples, as Rosenthal (1983:7) points out, suggest "the futility of seeking generalizations that rest on treating all ethnic groups as similar to one another and different from the dominant culture."

As with ethnicity, religion may influence generational relationships. Catholics in general place considerable emphasis on childbearing and family life/stability and so *Catholic women might be expected to be supportive of their elderly.* Also, *women who frequently participate in church services might be expected to be highly supportive of their elderly.* The argument here is that frequent attenders are more likely to be intrinsically religious and hold pro-family values.

In order to highlight the distinctive nature of culture, it is useful to distinguish between ethnic culture and immigrant culture. The ethnic culture, according to Rosenthal (1983:11) "is quite different from immigrant culture, since new meaning may have developed in response to post-immigration experiences." The argument here is that with assimilation, ethnic culture is likely to lose, and generational relationships might be negatively affected. If this is true, immigrant culture might affect attitudes and behaviour toward care for elderly quite differently than ethnic culture; *first-generation Canadians (foreign-born and immigrated to Canada at age 12 or more) are likely to be*

more supportive than second-generation (foreign-born and immigrated to Canada before age 12)and third-generation (native-born of native parentage) Canadians.

Another concern is for the relationship of attitudes about family life and sex-roles to supportive behaviour. Some researchers (e.g., Ogburn and Nimkoff, 1955) see the family as decreasing in importance and losing many of its functions and traditional values. Inspite of general speculation about changing functions of the family and the implied decline in importance of "traditionalism" in favor of "modernism", there has been little empirical research directed toward determining the extent to which traditional and egalitarian attitudes influence family relationships on care for elderly in contemporary North American Society. Since the "breakdown" of the traditional family is seen as largely connected to industrialization, and particularly the changing role of women, a central question is whether traditional and egalitarian attitudes are directly related to family support. According to Rosenthal (1983:6), "an ethnic family is often characterized by respect for elderly members, a high degree of familism, cohesion, and continuity between the generations, and high levels of support for older people on all dimensions of family life" as opposed to non-ethnic families.

There is no widely accepted operational definition of the abstract concept of traditionalism. For purposes of this study, the measure by which traditionalism is defined is attitudinal. The women were asked to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement with four statements that were attached to family living and having children. A sample item, in this case is: "Having a child provides a goal in life that nothing else can replace." The indicator is based on the assumption that relative preferences for the parent role may be reciprocated in the supportive behaviour. Specifically, *we expect that highly traditional women are more supportive of their parents.*

The women's egalitarian attitudes may be expected to have significant implications for the care of the aged. The familial roles to some extent become incompatible for women who hold egalitarian views and non-familial roles take precedence. Therefore, it appears reasonable to anticipate that *women who are more egalitarian are less supportive of their parents.* Campbell and Brody (1985),

however, demonstrate that despite the fact that American women are more egalitarians than Japanese, attitude toward filial responsibility is more positive among the Americans than among the Japanese.

Little is known about the effect of reciprocal generational roles on the care of the elderly: Will the expectation of support from children affect the support provided? It seems logical to believe that increased longevity itself may bring about changes in generational relationships producing stronger familial relationships and higher degree of exchange of assistance and support between generations. Under these circumstances, it is anticipated that *women who expect to receive support from their children tend to be more willing to provide care for their parents.*

A description of the selected variables with their means and standard deviations is presented in Table 1[1]. The dependent variable used in this study 'the willingness to provide care' was worded as follows:

> If need be, would you be willing to have your parents live with you for an extended period of time?
>
> Yes.....
>
> No .....

In order to test the theoretical perspectives set forth above, we employed two data analytic strategies. The first is the method of examining the means/percentages of the variables in each of the two groups of women: those who are and who are not willing to have their parents live with them, if needed. The second analytic strategy we used is that of discriminant analysis, which provides a more refined test of our hypotheses. This method helps to examine whether two or more groups of individuals differ markedly or only negligibly on a given set of characteristics. In simple terms, the purpose of discriminant analysis is to develop an equation that helps discriminate among two or more groups.

Table 1

Brief Definitions, Means, Percentages, and Standard Deviations for Selected Characteristics of Women Classified According to Whether (Group 1) or Not (Group 2) They Would Like to Have Their Parents Live With Them for an Extended Period of Time

Characteristics	Variable Description	No. of Cases	Group	Mean/ Percentage	SD
Willingness to Care	Respondent's indication that whether or not she likes to have her parents live with her for an extended period of time, if needed (1=yes; 2=No)	3,919 932	1 2	80.79 19.21	–
Age	Age in years at time of 1984 interview	3,919 932	1 2	30.36 32.64	8.36 8.53
Education	Respondent's number of years of schooling	3,918 932	1 2	12.64 12.76	2.80 2.99
Income	Total family income in 12 months proceeding 1984 interview	3,396 831	1 2	$31806.73 $34292.89	$20,846.31 $21,940.48
Marital status[a]:					
Married/ Common-law	Marital status (1=married/ common-law; 2=widowed/	2,632 680	1 2	79.48 20.54	–
Widowed/Seperated/ Divorced	seperated/divorced; 3=single)	323 87	1 2	78.78 21.22	–
Single		963 166	1 2	85.22 14.69	–
Employment Status[a]:					
Working	Employment status (1=working; 0=Non- working)	153 36	1 2	80.95 19.05	–
Non-working		248 53	1 2	82.39 17.61	–

contd

Table 1 continued

Religion[a]					
Catholic	Religion of respondents (1=Catholic; 2=Protestant; 3=Other)	1,952	1	82.05	–
		426	2	17.91	
Protestant		1,361	1	80.44	–
		332	2	19.82	
Other		606	1	77.69	–
		174	2	22.31	
Ethnicity[a]:					
British	The Ethnicity or cultural group to which the respondent or her male ancestor belong on first coming to North America (1=British; 2=French; 3=Other)	1,399	1	79.49	–
		361	2	20.51	
French		860	1	77.76	–
		246	2	22.24	
Other		1,659	1	83.58	–
		326	2	16.42	
Generation of Immigration[a]:					
First-Generation	Foreign-born and immigrated to Canada at age 12 or more	385	1	87.50	–
		54	2	12.27	
Second-Generation	Born of Foreign or mixed parentage or immigrated to Canada before age 12	167	1	81.07	–
		39	2	18.93	
Third-Generation	Native-born of Native parentage	2,636	1	79.83	–
		666	2	20.17	
Religious Assiduity	Respondent's report of her participation in religious services (1=every week; 2=every month; 3=a few times a year; 4=rarely or never)	3,912	1	2.84	1.36
		932	2	3.01	1.43
Traditional Female Roles[b]	Respondent's attitudes toward mothering and careers	3,859	1	7.10	2.05
		911	2	7.40	2.31
Egalitarian[c] Attitudes	A Composite index based on responses to questions on	3,838	1	5.72	0.57
		911	2	5.73	0.60

contd

Table 1 continued

	division of labor within the family				
Reciprocity of Support	Respondent's indication of whether or not she need financial assistance from children when retired (1=yes; 2=No)	3,495 841	1 2	1.94 1.97	0.24 0.18

[a] Figures in column 4 correspond to present
[b] A higher score on this item indicates less traditional
[c] A higher score on this item indicates more egalitarian

Multivariate techniques for the analysis of data sets involving categorical dependent variables have become widely available in recent years. For example, the multiple classification analysis using the GSK (Grizzle, Starmer, Koch) approach (1969) or the maximum-likelihood approach (Goodman, 1968; 1970; 1972) have become most widely used analytic techniques in the social sciences. However, these approaches require a moderately large sample size (Swaford, 1980). In the present analysis, this requirement cannot be met that when the sample is subdivided by generation of immigration and/or ethnic groups, we are left with few cases, and many cells of the multiple classification are practically empty when the explanatory variables are simultaneously taken into account. For these reasons, discriminant analysis appears to be the most suitable technique for the present purpose.

Results

As Table 1 indicates, nearly 81.0 percent of the women who have their parents alive (one or both) indicated that they are willing to have their parents live with them for an extended period of time, if needed. Now that it has become clear that the great majority of women are willing to provide support for their elderly parents, it is important for us to know whether this willingness is related to the characteristics of the care-givers themselves or whether it is a transitional phenomenon of the "modern" family in contemporary north-America.

The data in Table 1 indicate that two-thirds of the women who are willing to provide care for their parents are married/common-law and third-generation Canadians (67.16% and 67.26% respectively). In addition, nearly half of these women (49.81%) are Catholics and more than one-third (35.70%) are of British ethnic origin. Also, about one-third of these women are frequent attenders of church services. As Table 1 indicates, Group 1 (women who are willing to have their parents live with them) differs from Group 2 (women who are not willing to have their parents live with them) in the following respects:

1. Group 1 women, on the average, are younger than Group 2 women;
2. Although the differentials are trivial, the women of Group 1 are, on the average, less educated

than the women of Group 2;

3. Group 2 women, on the average, have larger income than Group 1 women ($2486.00 more);
4. Proportionately more Group 1 women are first-generation immigrants (excluding the third-generation women);
5. Slightly less than 40.0 percent of Group 1 women and nearly 41.0 percent of Group 2 women are employed; and
6. Group 1 women do not differ much from Group 2 women with regard to traditional and egalitarian attitudes, and reciprocity of support.

The discussion of bivariate relationships, however, displays only part of the story; it does not address the *relative* effects of the independent variables on willingness to support. A discriminant analysis was carried out to identify the set of variables that distinguished most successfully between the two groups of women. Apart from employment status, which contains a large number of missing values, this analysis included all of the independent variables described in Table 1.

Table 2 shows the results of the analysis including only the variables that significantly increased the discrimination between the groups. The standardized discriminant function coefficients, which can be interpreted in much the same way as beta coefficients (standardized regression coefficients), give an assessment of the *relative* impact of the variables in the model. The sign attached to the coefficient indicates whether the variable is making a positive or negative contribution. Thus, the negative sign may be interprete as representing a pull toward Group 1 and the positive sign as representing a push toward Group 2. The value of Wilk's lambda is an inverse measure of the remaining variance; a large value of Wilk's lambda indicates that much of the difference between the groups remains unexplained. Rao's V is a generalyzed distance measure; the change in Rao's V indicates the change in discrimination power due to the addition of a new variable. Finally, the significance of the change in Rao's V measures the test of statistical significance.

Table 2

Summary Table of Discriminant-Function Analysis and Standardized and Unstandardized Discriminant Coefficients Using Two Groups of Women, Group 1 and Group 2

Variables Entered	SDC	UDC	Wilk's Lambda	Rao's V	Change in Rao's V	Sig of Change
Age	0.725	0.090	0.989	33.695	33.695	0.000
Traditional Female Roles	0.350	0.165	0.986	44.449	10.754	0.001
Reciprocity of Support	-0.302	-1.313	0.983	51.755	7.306	0.007
Religious Assiduity	0.306	0.227	0.982	56.619	4.864	0.027
Marital Status[a]	0.253	0.562	0.981	60.077	3.459	0.063
Education	0.157	0.056	0.981	61.498	1.421	0.233
Constant		-5.653				

Classification	No. of Cases	Predicted to be in Group 1	Predicted to be in Group 2
Group 1	3,919	2,249 (57.4%)	1,669 (42.6%)
Group 2	932	394 (42.2%)	539 (57.8%)

Percent of cases correctly classified = 57.47

Eigen Value = 0.020
Chi-square = 60.821
D.F = 6
Significance= 0.000
SDC = Standardized Discriminant Coefficient
UDC = Unstandardized Discriminant Coefficient

[a] 1=Married; 0=Non-married

As is apparent, age emerges as the single best discriminating variable (Table 2). It is followed by traditional female roles which contributes substantially to the change in Rao's V. Reciprocity of support also contributes significantly as does religious assiduity. When equal probabilities are used to predict group membership, the final disciminant function correctly classifies 57.5 percent of the women included in the analyses.

Taken together, the results of the discriminant analysis suggest two factors as important determinants of willingness to provide care: age and traditional female roles. Stated otherwise, willingness to support one's parents is likely to depend on one's age and traditional attitudes; the more traditional the woman's views, the greater the professed willingness to support. Second, our results indicate that younger children are more supportive of their parents than older children. The latter finding is consistent with our previous finding that Group 1 women, on the average, are younger than Group 2 women.

Disaggregation of the women with respect to generation of immigration and ethnic origins (see Table 1 for definitions) allows us to address several questions. First, do generational/ethnic differences provide insights into the discrimination of the two groups of women? Do the factors that influence willingness to support behave in the same manner among all the generation of immigrants/ethnic groups? The results presented in Tables 3A through 4B (respectively for the three generation of immigrants and the two ethnic groups, the British and the French) further clarify cultural influences on willingness to support.

With few exceptions, the results reported in Table 3A, 3B, and 3C do not appear to conform to a single pattern. For example, if religiosity is the primary factor discriminating the two groups of first-generation women, religion and age are the primary factors discriminating the two groups among second and third-generation women.

Table 3A

Summary Table of Discriminant-Function Analysis and Standardized and Unstandardized Discriminant Coefficients for First-Generation Immigrants

Variables Entered	SDC	UDC	Wilk's Lambda	Rao's V	Change in Rao's V	Sig of Change
Religious Assiduity	0.500	0.230	0.973	12.496	12.496	0.000
Marital Status[a]	-0.517	-1.278	0.967	10.090	3.478	0.062
Traditional Female Roles	0.318	0.155	0.963	11.145	1.055	0.304
Constant		-1.441				

Classification	No. of Cases	Predicted to be in Group 1	Predicted to be in Group 2
Group 1	385	250 (64.9%)	135 (35.1%)
Group 2	54	24 (44.4%)	30 (55.6%)

Percent of cases correctly classified = 63.78

Eigen Value = 0.038
Chi-square = 10.881
D.F = 3
Significance= 0.012
SDC = Standardized Discriminant Coefficient
UDC = Unstandardized Discriminant Coefficient

[a] 1=Married; 0=Non-Married

Table 3B

Summary Table of Discriminant-Function Analysis and Standardized and Unstandardized Discriminant Coefficients for Second-Generation Immigrants

Variables Entered	SDC	UDC	Wilk's Lambda	Rao's V	Change in Rao's V	Sig of Change
Religion[a]	-0.618	-1.293	0.945	8.598	8.598	0.003
Traditional Female Roles	0.608	0.256	0.914	14.045	5.447	0.020
Income	0.414	0.000	0.898	16.926	2.881	0.090
Constant		-2.195				

Classification	No. of Cases	Predicted to be in Group 1	Predicted to be in Group 2
Group 1	167	104 (62.1%)	63 (37.9%)
Group 2	39	12 (31.4%)	27 (68.6%)

Percent of cases correctly classified = 63.34

Eigen Value = 0.114
Chi-square = 15.869
D.F = 3
Significance= 0.001
SDC = Standardized Discriminant Coefficient
UDC = Unstandardized Discriminant Coefficient

[a] 1=Catholic; 0=non-Catholic

Table 3C

Summary Table of Discriminant-Function Analysis and Standardized and Unstandardized Discriminant Coefficients for Third-Generation Immigrants

Variables Entered	SDC	UDC	Wilk's Lambda	Rao's V	Change in Rao's V	Sig of Change
Age	0.810	0.102	0.982	47.695	47.695	0.000
Reciprocity of Support	0.257	1.204	0.979	54.247	6.553	0.011
Religious Assiduity	0.256	0.192	0.977	60.270	6.203	0.014
Education	0.221	0.082	0.976	64.602	4.332	0.037
Marital Status[a]	0.268	0.590	0.974	68.202	3.600	0.058
Traditional Female Roles	0.210	0.010	0.973	70.927	2.725	0.099
Constant		-8.170				

Classification	No. of Cases	Predicted to be in Group 1	Predicted to be in Group 2
Group 1	2,636	1,555 (59.0%)	1,081 (41.0%)
Group 2	666	278 (41.8%)	387 (58.2%)

Percent of cases correctly classified = 58.82

Eigen Value = 0.028
Chi-square = 69.888
D.F = 6
Significance= 0.000
SDC = Standardized Discriminant Coefficient
UDC = Unstandardized Discriminant Coefficient

[a] 1=Married; 0=non-Married

Examining the standardized discriminant function coefficients for the first-generation immigrant women (Table 3A), a different picture emerges. This time, marital status has a negative coefficient suggesting that first-generation women who are married are more likely to be supportive of their parents than their non-married counterparts. This contradicts our hypothesis that competing responsibilities of married women tend to have an adverse effect on willingness to support. Controlling for other factors, women who are frequent attenders of church services, are more likely than those who are not, to support their parents. In combination, the three variables in the model correctly classify 63.78 percent of the women included in the analysis. Table 3A, however, indicates that only 4.0 percent of the variance in willingness to support is explained by all the variables (Eigen value= 0.038).

Among second-generation immigrants (Table 3B), religion, traditional female roles, and income are the most important determinants for willingness to support and marital status, age, religiosity, and education are of little or no consequences. Both among first and second-generation women, then, the less traditional women are less supportive. Taken together, the results of Table 3B suggest a cultural dimension explaining nearly 12.0 percent of the variation in professed willingness to support.

Among native-born Canadian women, it is age that again has the strongest relationship with willingness to support (Table 3C). A surprising finding is that married women are more likely than non-married to be supportive to their parents. This is in sharp contrast to our earlier finding for first-generation women. However, the evidence is consistent with our hypothesis and is validated by analysis of the total population (see Table 2). The results presented in Table 3C indicate that it is demographic rather than cultural factors that explain the variation in willingness to support in the case of Canadian-borns.

Similar analyses are performed controlling for ethnicity. The results of these analyses are reported in Table 4A and 4B. The most important point to notice is that women who are frequent

Table 4A

Summary Table of Discriminant-Function Analysis and Standardized and Unstandardized Discriminant Coefficients for British Ethnic Group

Variables Entered	SDC	UDC	Wilk's Lambda	Rao's V	Change in Rao's V	Sig of Change
Religious Assiduity	0.526	0.386	0.997	4.412	4.412	0.036
Age	0.490	0.060	0.994	7.847	3.435	0.064
Reciprocity of Support	0.502	2.333	0.992	11.265	3.417	0.065
Religion[a]	-0.445	-1.061	0.990	13.900	2.636	0.105
Constant		-7.389				

Classification	No. of Cases	Predicted to be in Group 1	Predicted to be in Group 2
Group 1	1,399	718 (51.3%)	681 (48.7%)
Group 2	361	154 (42.7%)	207 (57.3%)

Percent of cases correctly classified = 52.57

Eigen Value = 0.010
Chi-square = 13.809
D.F = 4
Significance= 0.008
SDC = Standardized Discriminant Coefficient
UDC = Unstandardized Discriminant Coefficient

[a] 1=Catholic; 0=non-Catholic

Table 4B

Summary Table of Discriminant-Function Analysis and Standardized and Unstandardized Discriminant Coefficients for French Ethnic Group

Variables Entered	SDC	UDC	Wilk's Lambda	Rao's V	Change in Rao's V	Sig of Change
Age	0.878	0.109	0.971	23.637	27.637	0.000
Religious Assiduity	0.366	0.275	0.960	38.416	10.779	0.001
Traditional Female Roles	0.240	0.109	0.956	42.236	3.820	0.051
Egalitarian Attitudes	0.197	0.417	0.954	44.206	1.970	0.160
Education	0.171	0.057	0.953	45.341	1.135	0.287
Constant		-8.020				

Classification	No. of Cases	Predicted to be in Group 1	Predicted to be in Group 2
Group 1	860	515 (59.8%)	345 (40.2%)
Group 2	246	104 (42.2%)	142 (57.8%)

Percent of cases correctly classified = 59.38

Eigen Value = 0.050
Chi-square = 44.134
D.F = 5
Significance= 0.000
SDC = Standardized Discriminant Coefficient
UDC = Unstandardized Discriminant Coefficient

attenders of church services are more likely to be supportive of their parents, regardless of their ethnic origin. It should be noted, however, that the supportive attitude among the French is greatly determined by traditionalism and egalitarianism; less traditional and highly egalitarian women are less supportive of their parents than their counterparts who are more traditional and less egalitarian. Further, as the data in Table 4A indicate, women who expect to receive support from their children tend to be more willing to care for their parents. As is apparent reciprocity of support contributes significantly to supportive attitude of women of British origin.

These results suggests that a disaggregation of women by major ethnic origin is essential, as the influence of traditionalism and egalitarianism on professed willingness to support is greatly determined by ethnicity. A better understanding of the forces underlying this pattern will be realized if attention is directed to other ethnic origins as well.

Conclusions and Implications

A primary objective of this paper is to examine the relationships between selected socio-economic and cultural characteristics of women and their stated willingness to provide support for elderly parents. A second objective is to ascertain within the framework of discriminant function analysis the degree to which this willigness to care differs between the three generation of immigrants and British and French ethnic subgroups. We address these questions first by comparing women who are willing to care for their parents with those who are not. Later we address the question by disaggregating the whole sample of women into the two major founding cultures in Canada.

The most important result of the present analysis may be that a great majority (81.0%) of women in Canada are willing to provide care for their parents, if needed. The bivariate analysis provides the first hint about the answer to our question asking whether those who are willing to care differ from their counterparts who are not with respect to selected characteristics. About one-third of the women who are willing to support are married/common-law and belong to the Catholic religion.

Economic discrimination is quite substantial; the mean income of supportive women is almost 7.0 percent less than that of non-supportive women. Older women are generally less supportive than younger women. However, the bivariate analysis indicates that traditionalism and egalitarianism have little bearing on willingness to support.

A discriminant analysis of willingness to care, however, permits a more detailed study of the relationships of culture and other independent variables with willingness to support. This tells us that women who hold traditional values are less likely to assist their parents than those who are progressive. Women who report high religious participation are more likely than those with low participation to be supportive. Also, the results indicate that women who are first-generation immigrants are more willingness to have their parents live with them for an extended period of time.

Both the immigrant culture and ethnic culture should have some effect on the willingness to care. The discriminant analyses indicate that Catholics who are second-generation immigrants have the greatest likelihood of being supportive of their parents, and non-Catholics the least. Relative to second-generation immigrants, first and third-generation immigrants who report high religious participation are more likely than those with low participation to be supportive.

The results also suggest that British and French differ in their willingness to support in terms of selected characteristics. Thus, the chances of French being supportive are to a greater extent depend upon whether or not they hold traditional and/or egalitarian attitudes. Of interest also is the fact that religious assiduity plays a major role in determining the supportive attitude of women of any ethnic background.

It does appear that the 'modern' family serves as an important supportive institution for the elderly in Canada. Further, willingness to provide care for the elderly is hardly affected by the socio-economic status of the potential givers of care. However, there are clear cultural differences in supportive attitude. These cultural differences with regard to care must be recognized and taken into

account when addressing various political and socio-economic issues faced by the rapidly aging population. Variations in the immigrant and ethnic structure and their influence on an individual's attitude toward the aged may provide basic information to policy analysts and particularly to social welfare workers who work with the elderly.

The evidence indicates the persistance of a cultural setting in which generations have mutual respect and cohesion. Thus, as Rosenthal (1986:24) has pointed out, if some families are more supportive due to cultural heritage, practitioners such as social welfare workers might use this information in planning care for the aged. This is particularly important in a situation where socio-economic conditions play a minor role in the supportive behaviour of individuals. In other words, the evidence of this study suggests the importance of recognizing family support as a "natural support system", might help understanding whether or not social policies and programs are adaptable to the heterogenous cultural setting. Social planning based on knowledge of the norms and attitudes of various immigrant, ethnic, and religious groups might further the effectiveness of a service delivery system for the aged in this rapidly aging and multicultural Canadian society.

The unavoidable limitations in the present study indicate a need for additional research. For example, the importance of employment status in understanding the supportive attitudes was overlooked in this study due to large number of missing cases for the variable. The implications of increased female labor force participation are central to any discussion about relations with aging parents and the nature and pattern of help provided. Future studies might explore the relationships between women's work outside home and their supportive behaviours.

Another issue centers on the relationship between one's family history and supportive behaviour. It should be obvious that the supportive behaviour of a family member is related to his/her individual history as a child/spouse/parent. The family history and the family of procreation (if applicable) need to be studied, for their impact upon care for elderly.

Notes:

[1] Zero-order correlation matrix is available from the author upon request.

[2] The *Fact Book of Canada* (1983) reports that the "older population" itself is aging at an alarming rate. In 1981, those who were aged 80 and over represented 19.0 percent of the population aged 65 years and over. By the year 2001, they are expected to make up over 24.0 percent of the population aged 65 and over.

[3] One might suspect that such changes in the direction of relationships could be the result of multicollinearity. However, the zero-order correlation matrix shows no indication of such problems.

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